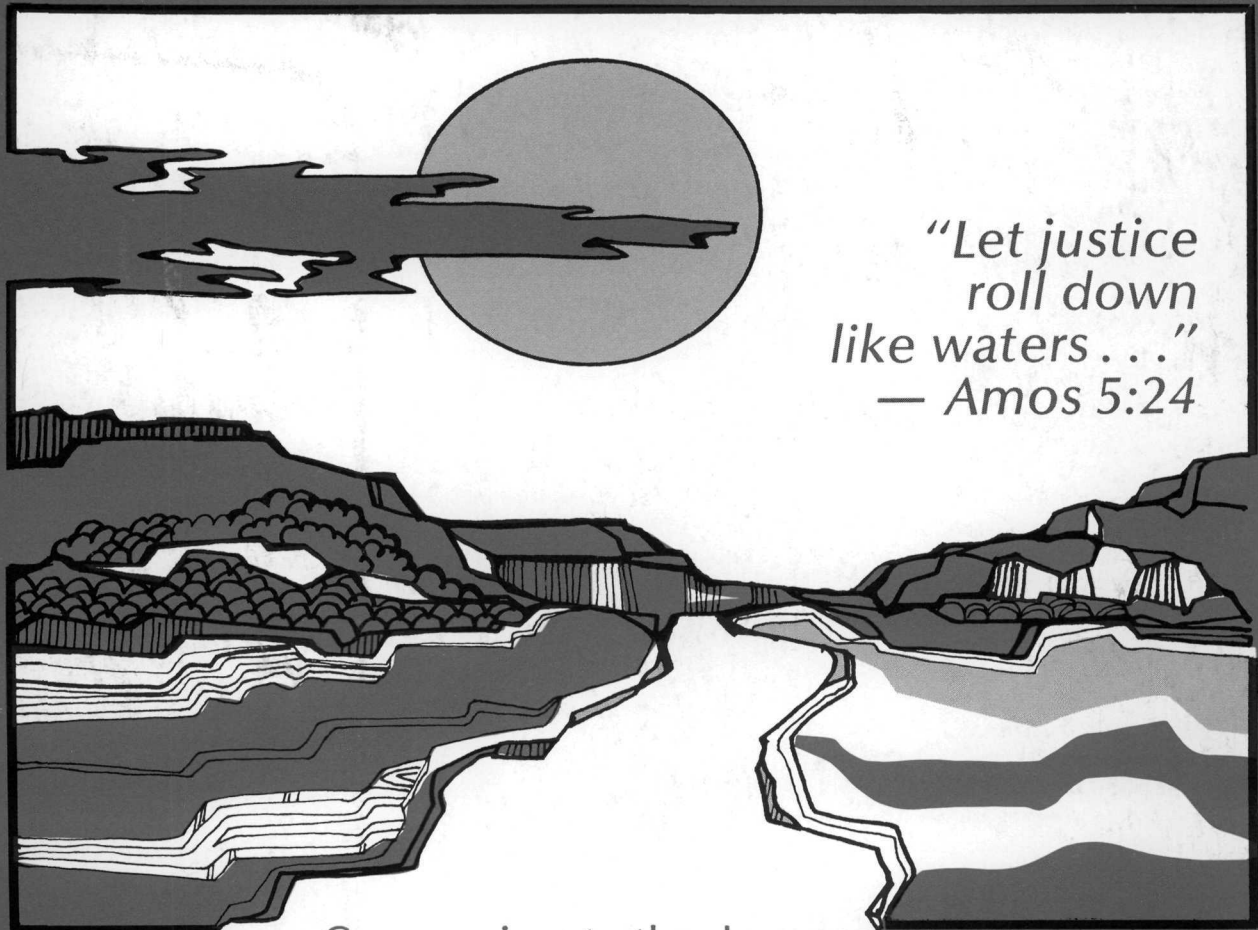


VOLUME . 69

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OCTOBER 1986

THE WITNESS



*"Let justice
roll down
like waters..."*
— Amos 5:24

Compassionate theology
Paul Moore, Jr.

Contemplation:
not for mystics only
Glenda Hope

Apocalypticism & the Right
Peter Stiglin

Black township theology
Buti Tlhagle

MICHAEL

Letters

Errs about Magsaysay

Alvaro Alcazar's article, "Historical Perspective: The Yellow Revolution," errs in reproducing the old hullabaloo and myths about Ramon Magsaysay, who had all the makings of a Paul Bunyan but who in reality was the direct creation of the CIA.

Filipino historians today rank him as one of the greatest U.S. puppets. He may have been sincere, but his reforms did not really benefit the people — except for the Central Luzon landowners, whose problem was temporarily solved by the exodus to Mindanao of some of the rebels in Huklandia. A subsequent deleterious effect on Mindanao was the displacement of Muslim and indigenous peasants from their land by the "Christian" settlers. Another scandal was that the wells Magsaysay built dried up sooner than it took to build them.

Alcazar's assessment of the church is also simplistic. For the church in the Philippines, as elsewhere, is "divided." Part of it is pro-people; another part is pro-vested interests, pro-U.S., pro-church; and another segment is executing a balancing act on a tight rope.

When I compare the Philippine hierarchy with that of Brazil or El Salvador, I blush with shame. For it is wishy-washy about the poor, and even the pro-people bishops are too diplomatic to risk any danger from the military. All of them could qualify for top positions in the diplomatic corps. This does not mean, however, that they do not accomplish some good deeds for the people. Perhaps I expect too much of them. A few have suffered in the struggle, among them Bishops Escaler, Purugganan, and Fortich.

**A Filipino nun
Name withheld upon request
New York, N.Y.**

Alcazar responds

I knew a priest in my Philippine barrio who dug wells in every village he visited

for the annual barrio fiesta Masses. When he died the barrio folks who walked for miles to town for his funeral called him "Padre Burabod" (the priest who finds spring water). Like Magsaysay's wells, his have dried up too. Yet the image and memory of a priest and a president digging wells for the usually ignored barrio people were at the time as revolutionary as the recent image and memory of soldiers laying down their rifles to accept Cory Aquino's yellow flowers. There have been times in history when symbols more than reforms bring about revolutions. In bread and wine "Remember me," a Galilean said 2000 years ago.

I will refrain from comparing the Philippine hierarchy to that of Brazil and El Salvador. We belong together in the task of liberation and St. Paul has some blunt words to say to those who are ashamed of even the ailing parts of "the Body." I remain joyfully hopeful because there are men, women, and children inspired by the examples of priests like Padre Burabod and Ed de la Torre, and bishops like Fortich and Claver.

**Alvaro Alcazar
Loyola University
New Orleans, La.**

Give Mom a chance

I read with interest Joseph Summer's account of his arrest for a civil disobedience action protesting Yale's investment policy (June WITNESS). In that article he expresses understandable concern over the way our society treats and processes those recently arrested.

However, in case any readers who have been considering engaging in civil disobedience were daunted by his description of conditions in a paddy wagon or holding cell, we should remember that the power of active nonviolence is transforming, and so such inconveniences need not be dreadful. If the risk of arrest is undertaken voluntarily and with love, then the state loses much of its power to

humiliate.

Summers expresses anxiety over the thought of anyone's mother having to undergo transportation in a police van. As someone who has often watched, with pride, his mother being handcuffed and taken to a paddy wagon, I would say that such an occurrence might be an opportunity for rejoicing rather than anxiety. Give your Mom a chance. She might do all right.

**Martin Holladay
Danbury Federal Prison**

Healthy skepticism

I simply want to echo and affirm Joseph H. Summers' comments on our "criminal justice" system being a form of counter-terrorism.

His description — down to the last detail of the "combination toilet/drinking fountain" — could be a description of my own experience of spending a night in jail, as a result of having called a police officer a name while he was terrorizing a gay party about three years ago in Dallas.

My jail experience, too, was a learning experience, and I am grateful for it — it gave me a renewed commitment to fighting gay harassment and oppression, and it gave me another lesson to help me unlearn my Sunday School lessons ("policemen are your friends"), in favor of a healthy skepticism about our police state.

**Robert Williams
Cambridge, Mass.**

Letters remarkable

Surprisingly, in your July/August issue most remarkable were your letters to the editor. It's a compliment that WITNESS can stimulate individuals to think on things theological.

The two letters by Gretchen Hall and Richard Baker noted a need for compassion and deliberation in the application of theology to contemporary concerns.

And then I read the letter by Diana Morris discussing the concern for efficiency on voting at General Convention. I wondered, why not put a weather vane to the roof of the delegates' center to record current winds of thought? This could then be connected directly to the computers and give almost instantaneous count of current thought without digression.

Seriously, of more concern to me is the thorough study of topics being discussed. What efforts are made by our church bodies to be certain, in the sense of Aquinas' *et altera pars*, all information worth serious consideration is viewed before a decision is reached? From what Hall and Baker wrote, and observations I have made, it seems to me our interest in having a dialogue on topics is less than it was in medieval universities?

Douglas H. Schewe
Madison, Wisc.

On closeting lifestyles

Re the Rev. Gretchen Hall's letter in July/August WITNESS about Carter Heyward's article, "Enforcing male supremacy":

I did not read Carter's article — not because I didn't want to but because someone in my building occasionally swipes my WITNESS. I hope they are converted enough to return it to me. Maybe I'm masochistic, but I like you!

Ms. Hall comes across as a right-wing version of what some have called a knee-jerk liberal. Only in her case it sounds conservative: She simpers for the families of the boys (who threw Charlie Howard off a bridge).

Arizona had cases of five Black men who were hanged for killing White gays. And, a case of a few White kids who were slapped on the wrist for the same. As the judge phrased it: "They don't even smoke pot."

I've had half a dozen friends murdered. Never — to my knowledge — has anyone been prosecuted for their deaths.

Ms. Hall counsels the closet for us. But in her next sentence she assures us that her husband of 50 years agrees with her. That is hardly "closeting" her own lifestyle.

John L. Kavanaugh
Detroit, Mich.

Seeks 'inclusive liturgy'

I am a woman ordained in the Church of England, waiting (not very patiently) to be ordained priest.

To fill the time of waiting profitably, for myself and, hopefully, for the church, I am undertaking a research degree with the general title of "Women, Theology and Language."

Part of this study involves looking at living liturgies which are not part of the formal worship of the church. I hope to find out how they tackle the thorny problem of inclusive language, especially non-sexist language — how they find positive and creative ways of speaking about God and humanity within worship.

I would be interested to hear from groups who have devised their own liturgies, and would be especially grateful for copies. I will gladly refund the cost of any such, and the postage, if necessary; and any copyrights will be respected if the material is used in a thesis.

My address is 387 Wakefield Road, Heyrod, Stalybridge, Cheshire, England SK15 3BL.

Anna-Katrine Sorensen
Cheshire, England

Browning letter gutsy

I write because I have written Bishop Browning citing his guts as evidenced in the letter you printed in the May WITNESS (in which he wrote President Reagan, assailing his "corrupt language" and Central American policy). I was surprised to notice, on about the third reading of his letter, to see that he was complying with General Convention resolu-

tions. But it was still gutsy. I reflect that Caspar Weinberger and George Bush are among us Episcopalians, and that I would be troubled to be censured by my rector. On the other hand, some of my church friends say, "So what?"

I wondered if other Episcopal publications could print the letter as easily, given the facts of life of advertising. I remember the dismay among Episcopalians years ago when the rector of Bruton Parish (Williamsburg, Va.), more gently chided President Johnson to his face. I was told we sure had a strong union!

Bishop Browning's stance reminds me of William Temple's prayer practice during World War II. Anyway, I hope for more help in shaping my prayers and votes, and generally use THE WITNESS as part of it.

The Rev. William Taylor
Lansdale, Pa.

Sanctuary revisited

Just finished your two articles on sanctuary in the June issue and feel that I must comment. The existence of "illegal aliens" is not new. It is simply that their numbers have grown.

Twenty years ago, when I lived in Paterson, N.J., *The New York Times* was carrying articles on "illegal aliens" and how they were being taken advantage of by unscrupulous landlords, employers, and yes, their own "legal" compatriots. One evening some Puerto Rican neighbors of mine came to my home to tell me about the plight of a woman who had fled from a particularly repressive regime in South America. The landlord, whom I had known from my childhood, wanted to take advantage of her. He told her that if she wouldn't comply, he would denounce her to Immigration. I went over and told him that if I found out that he had informed on her, I would personally

Continued on page 19

THE WITNESS

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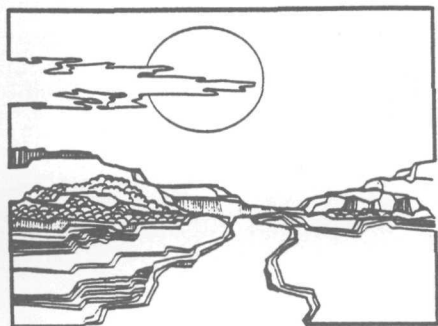


Table of Contents

6 **Apocalyptic theology and the Right**
Peter Stiglin

12 **Compassionate theology**
Paul Moore, Jr.

16 **Contemplation: not for mystics only**
Glenda Hope

20 **Black township theology: A view from the underside**
Buti Tlhagale

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A STUDY PACKET

THE CASE FOR DIVESTMENT

Prepared by
The Episcopal Church Publishing Company



“We face a catastrophe in this land and only the action of the international community by applying pressure can save us.”

Those were Bishop Desmond Tutu's words earlier this year, and his public statements during his recent enthronement as first Black Anglican Archbishop of Capetown reiterated his earlier message to the world: Apartheid is a sacrilege and the Church can be a tremendous power in destroying it.

To a congregation which reflected the multiracial, multinational character of the Anglican communion, Archbishop Tutu's moral challenge rang out: God demands that the faithful help “crush the oppressor,” he said.

The primary course of action taken by churches responding seriously to the Nobel prizewinner's words has been to divest in firms doing business in South Africa — to renounce their complicity in “the abomination that is apartheid.”

South Africa's economy has been described by William Teska, an Episcopal priest, as “a system of slavery held in place by terror.” It might be argued, then, that divestiture has been urged by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in order to escape the judgment of God upon our profiting from sin — before it is too late.

Thus far, the Episcopal Church Pension Fund has balked at this resolution, providing lukewarm responses. Many dioceses have ignored it. Others appear confused.

For those who would engage in serious study about whether some investments are morally intolerable, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company has prepared a study packet entitled *The Case for Divestment*.

Its contents supply a wealth of testimony to pray and think about, including a

summary of the South African Kairos document, by William Johnston; a status report on apartheid and an article on “The Case for Divestment” by Manning Marable; the exchange of correspondence between a reluctant Church Pension Fund and the Diocese of Newark, committed to divestment; backgrounders on the situation in South Africa, and a rich supply of resources. The packet was designed for study and *action*. Our spiritual health is imperiled by investments in South Africa. ■

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Apocalyptic theology and the Right

The manifold dissatisfaction with contemporary American society and the need for an immediate, radical solution has led leaders of American fundamentalist Christian groups to embrace a theology, commonly used in similar circumstances throughout history, by which they effect a transference of reality from the temporal to the cosmic. They have done this by rediscovery of the apocalyptic literature contained in the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition.

Although there is most certainly a social aspect to the current of apocalypticism infecting our society, I attempt here to examine it only in the light of scriptural and political reality. The definition of the word “apocalyptic,” as well as related terms, has been a source of controversy. As I can neither find fault with it nor improve upon it, I offer for the purpose of clarification a definition given by Paul Hanson in his comprehensive study of the subject, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*:

Apocalypticism (is) the system of concepts and symbols in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and gives expression to its interpretation of reality. The symbolic universe . . . will be determined by complex factors including the past traditions of the group developing into an apocalyptic movement, the particular socio-political conditions within which it lives, materials with which it comes into contact from surrounding cultures, the beliefs and atti-

tudes of rival parties, etc. . . . At the point where the disappointments of history lead a group to embrace that perspective (of apocalyptic eschatology) as an ideology, using it moreover to resolve the contradictions between traditional hopes and frustrating historical realities and to establish the identity of that group vis-a-vis other groups as well as the Deity, we can speak of the birth of an apocalyptic movement (apocalypticism).

Essential to understanding the recent advent of apocalypticism in America is a look at the historical context in which it has been formed. Central to the “end of the world” beliefs of the New Right telepreachers is their insistence that this will come to pass in an inevitable nuclear exchange between the two superpowers.

At the close of World War II, the Soviet government moved swiftly and decisively to gain political and military control over those areas on its borders which could conceivably present a future threat to the homeland. Although the subjugation of any people is lamentable and beyond justification, it is at least understandable in view of the fact that Russia had just lost 20 million people and suffered incalculable damages as well as years of deprivation and the most severe hardship throughout the Nazi invasion. It is also significant that this invasion was the third in half a century by foreign troops.

It was Gen. Douglas MacArthur, a right-wing general whose career ended with the termination of hostilities in Europe, who first perceived the Soviet action as the work of an “evil monolithic force” opposed to freedom (in principle)

and bent on world domination. MacArthur advocated the immediate and total annihilation of the Soviet military in an attempt to roll back the evil tide. Fortunately neither Congress nor the American people viewed the Soviet Union as an immediate threat. We had “the bomb” and they didn’t. There was only so far they could go. But a seed was planted. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion, later culminating in the Cold War, gave rise to the insanity of McCarthyism which in turn further fueled the fear of Communism both within and without.

With the accession of the Soviet Union to nuclear class status, the “communist threat” was whipped into an acute fever with the help of people like Dean Acheson and Paul Nitze and their lobbying for long-range massive arms spending. They were only held in check, I believe, by virtue of the fact that the U.S. still had in its favor a vastly superior nuclear arsenal. When the Soviets really began to improve their nuclear capability in the early ’70s, claims that they were trying to achieve nuclear superiority by Nitze, Sen. Henry Jackson and Ronald Reagan, all names linked with the U.S. military/industrial complex, were made to broaden a propaganda campaign aimed at gaining popular support for increased military spending. Those who had most to gain from a military build-up (i.e. the U.S. Department of Defense) began publicizing reports of comparative Soviet military spending in an attempt to convince the public that the threat of invasion was not only real but imminent. This campaign had the desired effect of sending “commie fever” into the realm of paranoia.

In 1980, the Reagan campaign shrewdly capitalized on the rising para-

Peter Stiglin is Administrative Assistant to the Bishop of New York and a lay preacher in the diocese. He is also a teacher of the Japanese language.

by Peter Stiglin

noia with a military build-up platform, depicting the U.S. as virtually defenseless. The President took advantage of the impotence experienced by many Americans during the Iranian hostage crisis and the aggressive mood it generated to help set the eschatological stage vis-a-vis the Soviets with his now legendary "Star Wars" speech and gain bi-partisan support for his militaristic worldview. By characterizing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and "the concentration of evil in the world," Reagan simultaneously ascribed to the U.S., at least implicitly, the virtue of a "holy nation" while absolving himself and the American people of being the cause of any evil in the world. He added that we are "enjoined by scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might."

Such enemy creation is not new. It is the single most effective means of cementing a group "by fomenting the group's hatred of an external enemy." Moreover, the group can be distracted from the defects in its own character, system or beliefs by focusing attention on the deficiencies, or "sins" of the enemy. By interpreting the policies of the Soviet Union in religious terms and implying innocence on the part of the holy nation, the Reagan imagemakers have created a patsy for all that ails the world: the carnage in Central America is a result of the imperialistic goals set by the Soviet Union there rather than attempts to overthrow legal governments by covert operations of the C.I.A.; the nuclear arms race is a result of the unlimited resources expended by the Soviets in their determination to achieve superiority and ultimately annex the West rather than the greed and power madness of the American military/industrial complex;

poverty in Africa is viewed as a result of communist adventurism and not five decades of American capitalism's pilaging of natural resources of these nations.

However, to give authority to a religious interpretation of world policy requires official religious sanction and this was not forthcoming from the mainline church community. In 1983, the Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter on war and peace calling the contemplated use of nuclear weapons immoral and deplorable. The World Council of Churches, a body made up of representatives from over 300 denominations in more than 100 countries, adopted a resolution at its 1983 assembly declaring "unequivocally that the

production and deployment, as well as the use, of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds," and went further to urge, "that Christians should give witness to their refusal to participate in any conflict involving weapons of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect." The consensus of the mainline Christian communities, along with similar condemnations from American Judaism, is that America's foreign policy is unacceptable on religious grounds.

Enter the court prophets.

The Bible has been used throughout history to justify and defend crusades and inquisitions, slavery, the Holocaust and, more recently, sexism and apart-



heid. Of current concern to Christian fundamentalists, however, is the perpetuation of a state of "holy war" against the godless communists. They preach the imminent second coming of Christ and the destruction of the forces of evil in this world by the people of God, siding with the Almighty in the final battle, Armageddon. Very specifically they state that this battle will take place in Israel, that it will be precipitated by an attack on Israel by the combined forces of Russia, Iran, Libya, Ethiopia and South Africa and will culminate in the destruction of the horde by American nuclear forces.

They insist that it is the will of God and cannot be prevented. They base their belief on an allegorical interpretation of several small sections of the Old Testament — particularly Ezekiel 38 and 39 — first advanced by Hal Lindsey in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which makes perfect sense to anyone who has not the slightest knowledge of the Bible or biblical history. Jerry Falwell, leader of the Moral Majority, says:

There are some very recent developments in Russia predicted by the prophet Ezekiel in chapters 38 and 39 of his book which point up the soon return of our Lord! These communists are god-haters; they're Christ rejectors and their ultimate goal is conquest. Some 2,600 years ago, the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel prophesized that such a nation would rise to the north of Palestine just prior to the second coming of Christ.

Also, Ezekiel wrote that the land would be anti-God (Ezekiel 38:3) and therefore God would be against it.

Falwell goes on to predict the invasion:

In 38:15 of Ezekiel, the prophet describes the major part of horses in this invasion; that horses will play a very dominant role. The Cossacks, of course, have always

owned and bred the largest and finest herd of horses in history.

The connections that Falwell makes here are at best flimsy and they get flimsier:

The purpose of this invasion, Ezekiel said, was to take a "spoil" (38:12). If one but removes the first two letters from this word "spoil," he soon sees what Russia will really be after — obviously, oil.

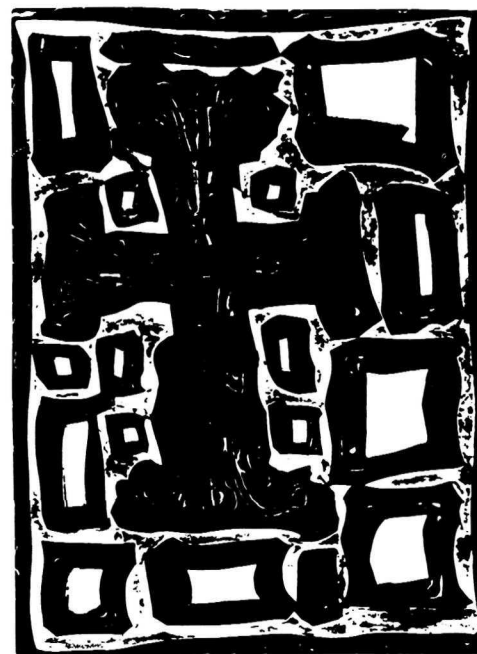
Giving Falwell the benefit of the doubt, and assuming that he knows that the Old Testament was not written in English, we must also assume that he doesn't care much for the fact that in Hebrew the words spoil and oil do not rhyme. For his theology does not depend for authority on what the Bible says but what *he* needs it to say. This is a "hunt and pick," or selective, theology. It can no more give an overview of the Bible as the word of God to take a chapter or a passage out of context than it can to use just a single word. Yet, consider the following:

You know, I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and . . . they certainly describe the times we're going through. (Ronald Reagan)

Almost all Bible teachers I know are anticipating the Lord's imminent return. And I do believe that we are a part of that terminal generation that shall not pass until our Lord comes. (Jerry Falwell)

We are that generation! (Hal Lindsey)

Now if ever a generation had a right to be moved by fear and get right with God, it's our generation. The headlines are screaming it at us, they're preaching it to us every day. (Billy Graham)



There'll be no peace until Jesus comes . . . Any teaching of peace prior to his return is heresy! It's against the word of God! It's anti-Christ! (James Robison)

Evangelical fundamentalists both in and out of government have publicly coupled Christianity with the nation. Jimmy Swaggart, whose electronic telechurch show raised over \$80,500,000 in 1983 and, at least according to Swaggart, has been viewed by 5 billion people in 38 countries, put it this way: ". . . this nation is a nation under God, of God and by God Almighty, and this is the Constitution of the United States — the word of Almighty God!" In a political speech just three days before his re-election to the Senate, Jesse Helms said, "Christianity is not only true, it's much higher than religion. *It is the meaning of America* as far as I am concerned."

Is this alliance a result merely of self-interest on the part of the fundamentalists? I think not, although it can reasonably be argued that such a marriage would benefit their efforts to see their

peculiar brand of morality become law.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the employment of a "state religion" goes back to ancient Israel and the prophets and priests of the court whose function it was to bless the schemes and ambitions of the king and nation. In turn they were allowed power and authority in the religious sector. Indications are that this is the case here. The fundamentalists, in their unflagging support of Reagan policies, in the face of the most obvious and overwhelming evidence of the blatant immorality of such policies as support of apartheid, nuclear deployment, the CIA's "Christian" guerilla war in Nicaragua, cutbacks in social welfare programs, etc., lend them the needed sanction of an institutionalized religion. In turn, Reagan's pulpit, the most powerful and influential in the world, gives the Falwellians the recognition and authority as a world-class religion they have so long desired. Inscripting each other's "rightness" in blood, they mutually *remain steadfast in their refusal to see the world situation as it really is*. It is this, we see, which is the key to understanding the apocalyptic beliefs of the fundamentalists.

Through 40 years of Cold War rhetoric mixed with rural patriotism, the pattern of hatred, fear and suspicion has acquired the force of religious belief. As the Pentagon and the White House continue to fuel enmity out of self-interest, as the power of the "evil empire" burgeons, as the hope for peace or even survival grows dimmer, is it any wonder that the fundamentalists finally abandon this world, jump ship as it were, to a vision in which the heavenly hosts themselves intervene on behalf of God's people? It is this sense of hopelessness from which, historically, apocalypticism has been born. It is a last hope: "The fact of Christ coming back should be a great comfort to every believer in the world. We've got hope! We've got an eschatology! We've got a program! We've got a future! The

future belongs to us!" (Billy Graham)

Graham's words are underscored by Sociologist Jeffrey Hadden of the University of Virginia, who predicted that the Christian right, powered by TV evangelists, is destined to become the major social movement in America during the late 20th century.

Earlier this year, *Time* magazine, recognizing their growing influence, ran Pat Robertson on its cover, highlighting a feature story on the televangelists entitled "Gospel TV: Religion, Politics and Money."

The article updated the positions of the "powerhouse preachers" who proclaim, in *Time's* pages:

"Theologically, any Christian has to support Israel, simply because Jesus said so." (Falwell); "The U.S. has a moral obligation" to support "freedom fighters who battle satanic Communism" (Robertson); and "(The Supreme Court) is an institution damned by God Almighty for allowing abortions" (Jimmy Swaggart).

Robertson, a potential Republican presidential candidate, said in an interview with *Time*, "I have felt that one day the Soviets or their satellites will invade Israel. I do not think the United States is going to war with the Soviets over Israel. But we might be drawn into something . . . If something were to happen, of course, the U.S. would come down on the side of the Israelis . . . I think that Soviet Russia is destined to fall, and I don't think the U.S. has to go to war with them to see that happen . . . But if they begin a venture in the Middle East, as I read the Bible, God is going to bring it to pass, not America or anybody else."

The eminent psychoanalyst, M. Scott Peck, in his treatment of the subject of human evil states that, "The central defect of evil is not sin but the *refusal to acknowledge it*." The right-wing fundamentalists' refusal to acknowledge the sins of America, from napalming in Southeast Asia to "Christian" execu-

tions in Central America, leaves a gaping hole in the moral mandates of the Gospel. That cavity, for both the evangelicals and the politicians, has been filled for four decades by focusing on the "evil" and sins of the "enemy." But the blackness of that hole continues to menace them. Armageddon is where they make their final stand: in the destruction of the world. To preserve their self-image of perfection as "God's people," they pilfer the Bible for self-justification. Uninformed by history or Scripture they *choose* to remain in the darkness rather than submit to the light of critical self-examination so central to the Gospel.

Neither the Soviet Union nor any other principality or power can present us with a threat that exceeds in authority the mandate of Christ that we learn to live together in peace for the sake of the whole world.

The last days may well be upon us if the fundamentalists have their way, but they do not come as the fulfillment of prophecy. They come as a result of human evil, *both* ours and theirs, and in direct contravention of God's will for God's world. And each of us has to answer for our contribution to the current crisis through our political indifference.

Resources

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Lance Woodruff

Alba Barreto-Jelinek, director of the AIDS Hope Health Center, right, chats with Richard Davis, facilitator at The Parsonage, an Episcopal Church ministry, at The Parsonage sign on Castro street in the midst of the gay and lesbian community, San Francisco.

AIDS hotline, day of prayer

November 9 has been designated by Presiding Bishop Edmond Lee Browning as a Day of Prayer and intercession in the Episcopal Church for victims of AIDS and those who minister to them.

And in San Francisco, the Hope Help Center has set up a WATS line at 1-800-AID-TALK to provide information, forward resource materials, make referrals, and to be a caring, listening presence. Responding will be Alba Barreto-Jelinek, director, who will take calls on the WATS line from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, Monday through Friday. Californians can call on 415-861-HOPE.

The Hope Help Center is an advocacy and resource entity set up within the Episcopal Church for AIDS prevention educators, persons with AIDS/ARC and their loved ones. Initial funding came from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. The Hope Help Newsletter is available from P.O. Box 6631, San Francisco, CA 94101.

An AIDS Hope Help Network has been organized from resources provided by attendees from Great Britain, Australia and the United States at the March 1986 National Episcopal Church Conference on AIDS. Additions are vital now that the epidemic is spreading beyond urban centers into rural and less populated areas where resources and support systems are less likely to be found, Barreto-Jelinek said.

It was also exactly one year ago on Nov. 9 that a memorial to those who had died of AIDS was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Some 332 names were inscribed at that time and read aloud as those attending stood in tribute and mourning. Today the list in the memorial book numbers about 1,000.

William Buckley attacked the Bishop of New York in his syndicated column for consecrating the memorial. "Is Bishop Moore planning a memorial for Stalin and his henchmen, another memorial for those who die of syphilis, another for those who OD on coke?" he asked.

"What is clearly missing from the bishop and from fellow travelers of this brand of groundless compassion, is any consideration to this: Some AIDS sufferers would rather contaminate other people, causing them to die a miserable death, than to control their own perverse appetites," he wrote.

Bishop Moore had pointed out in the dedication, "(This memorial) will be a witness to the city and community that we hold close in our love and care those persons who have AIDS or have died from AIDS. It will dignify this tragedy as much as possible. It will be a way of praying for the repose of their souls."



The Politics of AIDS

"When it rains, it doesn't rain on one man's house."

Bob Marley

Most, if not all public discussion centering around AIDS concerns the epidemiology and natural history of the debilitating and, as yet, incurable malady. This is important for clarification and public understanding of what has become a volatile and emotion-laden health crisis, but outside of the gay community, scant emphasis has been focused on the fact that AIDS also has become one of the most highly politicized issues in this country.

The political fallout from the AIDS phenomenon could seriously impede crucial medical breakthroughs, including the development of effective therapies and long-range preventive vaccine research, and significantly influence the nature of education and control programs. Moreover, evidence of a trend toward widespread legal discrimination against persons suspected of AIDS or AIDS-related complex (ARC) could result in almost as devastating an effect on the lives of other marginalized segments of our society as the physical manifestations of the disease.

U.S. Public Health Service estimates already place the cumulative number of AIDS cases at 270,000 by 1991, with a resulting 179,000 deaths. Some 74,000 cases and 54,000 deaths are anticipated in that year alone. The direct cost of medical care for Persons with AIDS (PWA's) will soar in this five year period to between \$8 — \$16 billion or \$46,000

per person. The staggering numbers and/or the price tag alone would serve as grist for any political mill and indeed they have.

AIDS has been described as a "growth industry" and a recent TV program boldly stated that the disease could do for an exclusive Houston hospital what heart transplants have done for Humana Institutes of Kentucky. Meanwhile, adequate funding for health care delivery to AIDS patients has become a serious problem for hospitals in poor communities and insensitive, unsympathetic medical and ancillary staff personnel are demanding legal relief from contact with them.

Equally as important are key issues involving the legal and civil rights of PWA's and those who may be required to undergo testing in AIDS research. Misinformation, coupled with homophobia, has led to a variety of problems. In Illinois the legislature considers a bill prohibiting a person with AIDS antibodies from getting married; in Los Angeles, an educational pamphlet aimed at intravenous drug users is impounded while a right wing organization distributes an inflammatory tract about the spread of the disease; in Virginia, a man suspected of being gay is fired by a restaurant owner who is afraid of AIDS; in Denver, a teenager is expelled from school after telling a nurse that he had tested positively for AIDS antibodies. And in all 50 states, legislation has been proposed granting local health authorities sweeping powers to quarantine people with AIDS and to forcibly test persons suspected of being exposed to the virus.

The question of testing looms as even more sinister. There is no diagnostic test for AIDS, only for HTLV-III antibodies, and 70 to 90% of those who test positively in this regard will not get AIDS. The ACLU has expressed apprehension over confidentiality in testing and how test results might be used in housing, education and medical and mental health care.

Talk of mandatory HTLV-III screening raises particular concern among Blacks and other minorities who would most be affected — food handlers, those who work in child care and other personal service jobs and those who least would be prepared to fight court battles over breaches of confidentiality. The Black community has fresh and painful memories of the racism associated with sickle cell anemia screening in the early 1970s when the implication of positive test results, indicating either the disease or the trait, produced violations of confidentiality, socio-economic discrimination and increased cost of insurance coverage.

The politics of AIDS threatens to create a new national class of "lepers." Caring Christians, acting out of Old and New Testament roots of our faith, must insist that any legal theories formulated be compassionately grounded in good medical data — not based on the hysteria that so often accompanies society's rush to transpose causes for things to one group or another. ■

Compassionate theology

by Paul Moore, Jr.

A new Tower of Babel resonates over TV and radio today. Never before have so many used the name of God to justify such a diverse number of views. Every thinkable and unthinkable social and political position is expressed on sundry issues. What is a listener to believe:

- Birth control is a sin? Or planned families are the only solution to the world's most pressing long-range problem of overpopulation?

- Homosexual persons are sinners and should not be encouraged? Or gay men and lesbians are entitled as any to protection under the law from discrimination?

- The Sandinistas are pawns of the Evil Empire? Or the revolution in Nicaragua is a God-given sign of hope for a poor nation?

- We must use our military and nuclear might to prevent atheistic communism from taking over the world? Or the Nuclear Freeze and subsequent nuclear disarmament is God's mandate to a globe on the edge of self-destruction?

Your views on which of these conflicting statements reflects the Word of God depends *not* on their *prima facie* validity, not on whether they can be supported by any biblical texts (for they all can), but by the criteria of acceptance or rejection you have built into your religious consciousness before you have even heard the choices pronounced.

Such conflicts for the average Christian were not always present. Before the advent of mass media — print, radio and television — religious people heard the social views of their own church on Sunday. They paid little attention to the views of others.

Roman Catholics on the local level spoke out on issues of family morality and stood up for the rights of labor wherein lay the interest of their major constituency. They backed a local politician for office regardless of their political position, if they had any, but with the implied understanding that the Ward Heeler would look after the physical needs of the people while the priest took care of their spiritual needs. In a way, it was not a bad system for the immigrant poor. But by and large, the high social doctrine of some of the great Papal encyclicals had little impact on the local Roman Catholic parish.

The Evangelicals were silent on social issues for different reasons. The world was seen to be so evil that the mission of the church was to “snatch brands from the burning,” to save souls *from* the world. This was accomplished through revivals, conversions and the threat of eternal damnation. The morality by which one avoided damnation consisted of no smoking, no drinking, no gambling and only enough sex to perpetuate the human race. (The story is told about an English bride who asked her mother what to do on her wedding night. The mother replied, “It is awful! Just grit your teeth and think of England.”) Public morality addressed the elimination of any taverns or

other places of ill repute which might lead one to such sins.

The exception, of course, was the Black church, which over the years became not only the solace of her people but the champion of their rights.

The mainline churches, with but a few notable exceptions, tended to keep a dignified silence, affirming the *status quo* with tasteful blessings over public patriotic gatherings. The 1919 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, for instance, had such an angry debate over a resolution commending collective bargaining as a Christian method of resolving labor disputes that the mover, Frederick C. Morehouse, editor of *The Living Church* (and hardly a radical), withdrew the resolution.

It was a rare thing, and has always been a rare thing, for a church to stand up for a social or political position against the interest of its ruling majority. Thus the cultural pluralizing of the church in the last generation accounts for the conflict over social issues. When the massive upheaval of the Civil Rights and Peace Movements began to rock the land, many leaders of mainstream churches took the direction of the Black churches and the pacifist Quakers and joined these movements, throwing their weight behind what appeared to be movements respectively of justice and of peace. This caught their unprepared congregations quite by surprise. Many lay persons left the church and only today have most of our people come to accept the propriety of the church speaking out on social and political issues.

The Rev. Paul Moore, Jr. is bishop of the Diocese of New York.

Such a simplistic summary does not do justice to the exceptions to these generalizations, but I believe what I have written sums up the picture as seen by those fictitious straw persons, "The People in the Pews." However, now, because of the cacophony of voices, each claiming prophetic roots, we simply must develop a solidly biblical rationale for our pronouncements and actions.

First of all, as Anglicans we accept the Bible as a whole to be the Word of God. We see each part in context within the whole. We consider the literary form of each passage in accepting or rejecting the quality of its truth. Myth contains truth within the richness of prehistoric legends. Poetry enlightens truth with images, rhythms and metaphors, speaking to the unconscious as well as the conscious. History states fact, but always from the point of view of the historian. Biography paints true pictures of persons, but each is a portrait and not a photograph.

Further, the Word is always incarnate: Even that part of the Word which came before the Word made flesh was expressed within and through the history and culture of the day. The consistency of the Word, the Bible as a whole, lies not in its internal agreement, but in its progressive evolution from primitive gropings to the fulfilled glory of the Gospel. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," bespoke a rough frontier justice. Yet as the mystery of God's love came to be revealed, Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek."

Given all the ambiguities, given all the traditions, given the bitter warfare be-

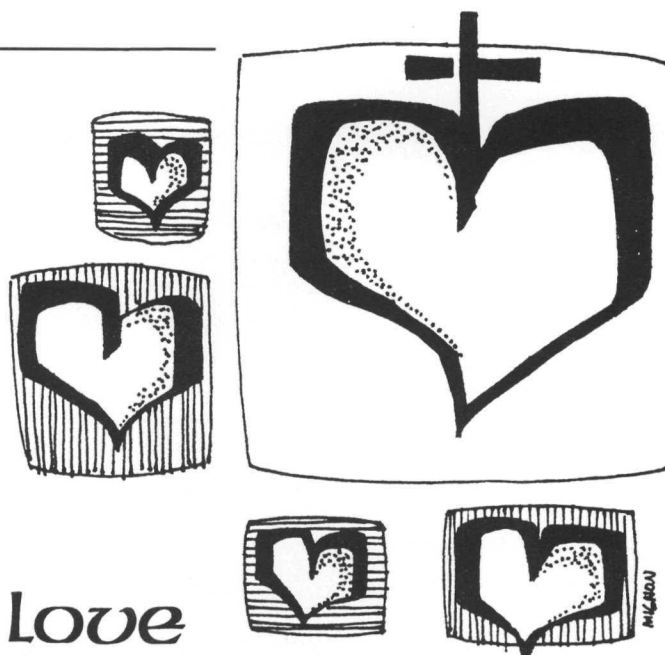
tween Christians over the years, is there any use in even attempting to speak the Word when particular issues are addressed? I firmly believe we have a solemn duty so to do. And I also believe that the Word can come alive authentically for the most uneducated campesino in Nicaragua or the most sophisticated Ph.D. at Cambridge.

The ultimate guidelines to biblical prophetic ministry lay in the Summary of the Law. If the stated point of view threatens any individual, unnecessarily hurts anyone or affronts the dignity of any human being, it is *not* of God. Hence, pronouncements on foreign affairs must be biased always toward peaceful means as well as just ends. Pronouncements on economic justice must be biased toward "a preferential option

for the poor," as the Latin American Roman Catholics phrase it, which informs prophetic teaching from Amos to St. Paul. No other biblical view has such ancient roots. And such an option must inform our understanding.

The implementation of ecclesiastical discipline must bear in mind that the Sabbath is made for the man, not man for the Sabbath. This humanistic principle also has a venerable past. "I despise your feasts and take no delight in your solemn assemblies" . . . "But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." (*Amos 5:21-24*) Thus it is that religious taboos must give way to charity, and that the church must be seen as an instrument of love, not an end in itself.

The full use of reason, as well as the



Love
is not just words
and mere talk
But something
real and active.

most prayerful search for the meaning of revelation, should test each and every issue. Hence an understanding of modern psychology is coupled with an Old Testament sense of justice in stating a position for Gay Rights. In this connection a recent example is the use of scripture to condemn or uphold "Intro 2," New York City's civil rights law as extended to sexual orientation. Those who were against it used the proof texts of scripture, which when analyzed are often found merely to be against temple prostitution or a breach of hospitality laws. Nonetheless, proof texts are to be found which at least seem to condemn homosexuality. Those of us on the other side claim that the basic principle of justice which runs throughout the Bible prohibits the persecution of a person for something he or she cannot help. Modern psychology, unknown in biblical times, attests homosexuality to be such a circumstance. (Jesus is not recorded as ever having mentioned the subject.)

These are, then, guidelines for the use of scripture to support social pronouncements, but one must be most careful not to manipulate scripture to support his or her own prejudices. Self-searching prayer before speaking out is salutary in this regard!

Another issue which arose in the '60s, but which is not mentioned often today, is whether a given person has a right to express a view not held by his or her fellow Christians. When one speaks *for* the church, some pronouncement or resolution of General Convention should back the view. However, if one is speaking out of conscience and conviction on a matter about which the church has not taken a stand, then it should be clear that one speaks *to* the church. This may seem a subtle distinction but it is an important one.

Furthermore, in our Anglican tradition the individual is encouraged to make up his or her own mind, informed by scripture, tradition, reason and the teach-

ing of the church. We have no *Magisterium*, in the Roman Catholic sense, before which individual intellects must bow.

As an Encyclical Letter from the bishops during the Lambeth Conference of 1930 puts it:

Our special character and, as we believe, our peculiar contribution to the Universal Church, arises from the fact that, owing to historic circumstances, we have been enabled to combine in our one fellowship the traditional Faith and Order of the Catholic Church with that immediacy of approach to God through Christ to which the Evangelical Churches especially bear witness, and freedom of intellectual inquiry, whereby the correla-

tion of the Christian revelation and advancing knowledge is constantly effected.

I believe it is important to think through these matters today because the governments of the world, especially our own, seem to be explaining their actions in moral and religious terms. Rather than retreat from the scene, I believe we are called to speak forth the Word of God with decency, sanity and compassion. We must stand up to the religious right, which takes such a dangerous position, whether from the Catholics or the Evangelicals. Rome's power grows. The Moral Majority continues. Much money is available for quasi religious foundations of a hard conservative line.

We are small against such power, but our voice must continue to be heard. ■

A Clergy Calorie Counter

Everybody is trying to watch the waistline, and that includes members of the clergy. Now, for the first time ever, physiologists and religious leaders have combined talents to produce a clergy calorie counter. This chart below gives the number of calories the body burns in performing the following activities:

Going the second mile	100
Going to Diocesan Convention	200
Standing up for your convictions	75
Standing up for your convictions at a Vestry meeting	150
Celebrating a High Mass	260
Celebrating a Low Mass	130
Being rector of a High Church (per week)	14,000
Being rector of a Low Church (per week)	14,000
(Extra preaching offsets extra liturgy)	
Counseling a troubled parishioner (per hour)	150
Counseling an untroubled parishioner (per hour)	300
Attending a typical committee meeting	265
Attending a boring committee meeting	265
Getting into hot water	325
First year as rector (honeymoon year, weekly)	15,225
Second year as rector (weekly)	22,325
Third year as rector (weekly)	31,235
Making ends meet on your paycheck	1,245
Fighting the good fight and finishing the course	By this time, it won't matter

— David E. Sumner

Short Takes

The gift of contradiction

The fundamentalist mind-set sees little but problems in the multiple sources and viewpoints we have from Genesis to Revelation. It feels a need to explain away the inconsistencies, the several perspectives, the different accounts. But what a richness there is in the contradictions — in those two different stories of creation, or those four portraits of Jesus, or in the divergent views on faith and works that we find in the book of James and the letters of Paul.

Try matching Jesus' approval of Zaccheus's enthusiastic decision to give half his goods to the poor with Jesus' demand of the rich young ruler, "Sell all you have." Or put Luke's Jesus, who forbids all divorce, together with Matthew's, who allows it in the case of adultery...

The great moments in music are often those tense ones when dissonance hangs impatiently in the air, waiting for harmonic resolution. Music without its dissonances would too often be innocuous and insipid — as the Christian faith would be if we explained away its mysteries. Thank God for the gift of contradiction.

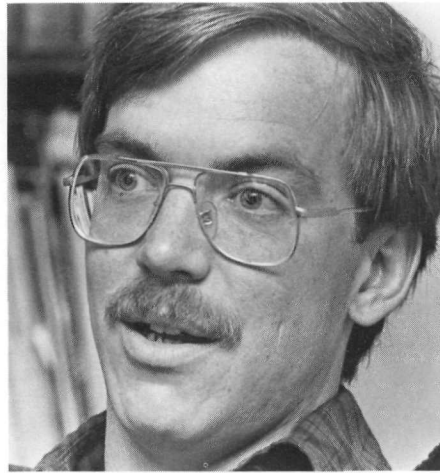
Gaylord Noyce

***The Christian Century* 8/13-20/86**

Results of Capitalism

The existing capitalist system, inhuman, dependent and a creator of marginalisation — is being constantly reinforced by the official policy of the government through its incentives to large estates and monoculture in the region. This policy favours the dominant oligarchies, political repression and economic slavery and encourages, through the absence of sanctions, the practice of every type of corruption. The immediate consequences of all this are growing unemployment and underemployment, forced migration, unrestrained increases in the cost of living, malnutrition and hunger, a huge increase in violence, the breaking up of families, the destruction of the people's culture, the undermining of values, the weakening of faith and the destruction of hope among young people.

**Roman Catholic Bishops of Brazil
1984 Statement**



Defrocked pastor in film

Daniel Solberg, above, former pastor of Nativity Church in Alison Park, Pa., who was defrocked recently by the Lutheran Church in America for his involvement with the Denominational Ministry Strategy in Pittsburgh, is one of the subjects of a new film, *The Fighting Ministers*.

The film shows how three ministers, their wives and families were galvanized by the DMS, an ecumenical urban outreach to unemployed steelworkers, to confront local corporations who were liquidating the region's steel industry while investing overseas. *The Fighting Ministers* was shot by actor David Soul, Solberg's brother, known for his TV role in "Starsky and Hutch." The 56-minute film can be rented for \$75 from California Newsreel, 630 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103. It has received acclaim from Harvey Cox and Bill Moyers.

Defining the struggle

The struggle against our own weaknesses — no matter what difficulties the enemy may create — is the most difficult of all, whether for the present or the future of our peoples.

Amilcar Cabral

Quote of note

An idea, like a ghost, according to the common notion of ghosts, must be spoken to a little before it will explain itself.

— Charles Dickens

Cost of apartheid

In pursuance of apartheid's ideological racist dream, over 3,000,000 of God's children have been uprooted from their homes, the homes have been demolished, and they have then been dumped in the Bantustan homeland resettlement camps. I say dumped advisedly; only things or rubbish are dumped, not human beings. Apartheid has, however, ensured that God's children, just because they are black, should be treated as if they were things, and not beings of infinite value created in the image of God. These dumping grounds are far from where work and food can be procured easily. Children starve, suffer from the often irreversible consequences of malnutrition — this happens to them not accidentally, but by deliberate government policy. They starve in a land that could be the bread basket of Africa, a land that normally is a net exporter of food.

The father leaves his family in the Bantustan homeland, goes to the so-called white man's town as a migrant, to live an unnatural life in the single sex hostel for 11 months of the year, being prey to prostitution, drunkenness, and worse. This migratory labor policy is a cancer in our society. This cancer, eating away at the vitals of black family life, is deliberate government policy. It is part of the cost of apartheid, exorbitant in terms of human suffering.

The Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu

SDI: Pork-barrel project

For defense contractors across America, President Reagan's Star Wars program is more than a new strategy for national defense. It is the business opportunity of a generation, a chance to cash in on billions of dollars of federal contracts... And the industry is starting to mobilize its fabled lobbying apparatus to build political support for what critics charge could become the greatest federal pork-barrel project in history.

***Wall Street Journal* 5/21/85**

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.

Abraham Maslow

Contemplation: not for mystics only

by Glenda Hope

Before talking about contemplative prayer, we must consider the meaning of the word *discipline*. Not an “in” word in our society for a long time, it comes from the same root as the word *disciple*, a learner. Discipline is a way of learning which may also involve some unlearning. Discipline has come to be thought of as a negative thing — restriction — a narrowing of life. In some ways, this is true. But discipline as considered here is always for the purpose of liberation.

Too long have we settled for the good instead of the best, the acceptable instead of the excellent, the pretty instead of the beautiful, the warmth instead of the fire. Discipline moves us beyond such mediocrities; spiritual discipline moves us beyond goodness to holiness, sanctity, wholeness. “A way of seeing the world that makes the morning’s getting out of bed, if not a pleasure, an act of love at least,” as James Carroll has put it.

I was once a ballet dancer. Going to the exercise bar often was not a pleasure. That type of discipline can only be sustained when it, too, is an act of love — love-for-the-dance, which is beyond performance or the receiving of adulation, sweet as that is. Love-for-the-dance is the oneness of your total being with all that is. In those mystical moments when there is no separation between the dancer and the audience, they breathe as one, transfixed at some point of timelessness and limitlessness. Neither is there separation between the two partners; spirits flow as one, bodies move in perfect unison even when they do not touch.

For love-of-the-dance, people undertake unbelievable discipline. They do not engage in it as a thing in itself, but for something much grander. This discipline is a sustained, daily phenomenon to which few are called.

But all of us are called to spiritual discipline — those gifted moments of timelessness and limitlessness: the mystical encounter with the Living God. We have not thought so. We like to label some people as “mystics” or “saints” settling them apart as different. They are no different from ourselves save in this one thing: They have undertaken a discipline moving them from goodness to holiness, from the warmth to the fire.

The Rev. Glenda Hope is a co-director of San Francisco Network Ministries, an urban based ecumenical ministry focusing on low-income, elderly, young adults, homeless and AIDS-impacted of the city. She is also co-pastor of Seventh Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Let us consider the discipline of contemplative prayer. Prayer as we usually think of it is rational, discursive, talking to God. Perhaps in doing that we will see something new. Meditation, on the other hand, is listening more than talking. Not seeing something new but a new way of seeing. Contemplation is not a seeing at all. It is a being seen. It is this we shall consider, though already I feel a bit silly since the essence of contemplative prayer is silence and contemplative prayer is always. The only way to know contemplative prayer, like the only way to know the joy of the dance, is to do it, beginning where you are.

The wonderful comic strip “Kathy” once portrayed Kathy inquiring about ballet classes. The receptionist said a new class for beginners was starting that very week. Kathy replied: “Oh, no. I don’t want a beginner’s class. I want to skip all those boring exercises and go right into leaping and twirling.” When we approach contemplative prayer, like Kathy, we want to “go right into leaping and twirling.” If you would dance, if you would pray, you must begin where you are.

In his book, *Contemplation*, James Carroll points out, “Real silence and serious prayer are tough. And we are each called to nurture them. We are not (yet) mystics . . . But we are alive. We do see . . . Prayer begins with the lives we lead, not with the lives of the saints. Perhaps the question should be, how do we already pray? How do silence, solitude, simplicity already touch me?”

What are the methods that may help me move, beginning where I am? The disciplines of meditation, which are preparation for contemplative prayer, can be summed up in one sentence. Meditation is learning to do one thing at a time.

A woman told of learning to play the violin. Her teacher repeatedly said: “You cannot chew gum and play the violin.” This is not only because your chin rests against the instrument. It is much more that playing the violin demands single-mindedness, *total* concentration. You must play-the-violin — nothing else — that only. You must not be anticipating the applause which will come at the end, not even anticipating the next note, but be aware only of the note flowing from you now. The Zen Buddhists have a saying for this: “When you walk, just walk. When you sit, just sit. Above all, don’t wobble.” Meditation is learning how not to wobble. Meditation is disciplining yourself to do one thing only — nothing else — to wait until that time when “out of the treasures of divine glory God may grant you strength and power through the Spirit in

your inner being, that through faith Christ may dwell in your hearts in love.”

Ponder the implications of that snatch of Scripture. What would you do if Christ came to live in your house today? Run around and straighten things up? Ply him with questions, taking notes on his answers? Talk a lot about what you think should be done, especially how certain others need to be shaped up? Leave? Sit there thinking of all the other things you need to be doing? Read some good devotional material? Apprise him of the fact that you have only 10 minutes and you would appreciate it if he would come straight to the point? Or would you be ready to “just sit” under the gaze of those eyes? Not grasping for some new experience or insight or idea. Just sit. Being seen by the eyes of the One from whom all that is takes its name, the essence of its being.

Perhaps you have known a time with another person when all the usual defenses behind which we hide, showing only a bit of self at a time, go down and you are really seen. All of you. A breathtaking moment of genuine intimacy for which we all yearn and of which we are all terrified, when it seems you dare not stay and cannot go. Contemplative prayer is like that. Not a seeing, but a being seen. Meditation is preparation for such a life. As such, it is an ongoing lesson in humility. Learning how embarrassingly undisciplined I am. Learning that I can manipulate thought, feelings, experiences, sensations — and I do — and call that meditation. But authentic meditation is truly learning that I cannot manipulate God, as much as I want to and try.

Waiting and listening is much more demanding than speaking, which is why few people move beyond prayer to meditation and even fewer are gifted with contemplation. Contemplation is letting go of all the certainties I have about God, all the names by which I would call God to me. Letting go even of the certainty that God will somehow meet me in the silent place. Carlo Caretto says in *The God Who Comes*: “(God) is afraid that, instead of loving God in God’s naked being, we love creation, riches, gifts . . . the joy God bestows, the peace . . . the truth God makes me a present of. If I have knocked, why has God not opened to me? My lust for possession is stronger than my true love for God. Wait! Oh, the anguish of the ‘wait,’ the emptiness of that absence! But then, little by little, I began to understand as never before that God was present in the emptiness, in the waiting. ‘You believe you love Me but in reality you are loving yourself. For your sake I left what was mine and came to you. You do the same.’ Do not expect to have the Beatific Vision after 10 minutes of recollection. Do not seek for pleasure or enjoyment in prayer and do not wrap yourself round with clouds of sentiment. Do not go out hunting for God as the latest curiosity in your life or as the last lover in your old age. Accept faith as it is — naked.

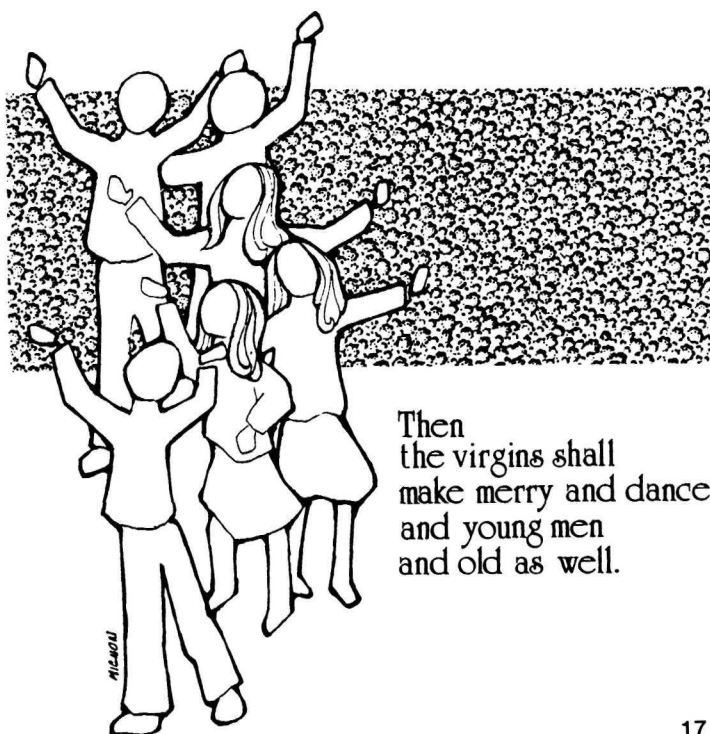
Wait all your life for the God who is always coming, and who does not show up to satisfy your curiosity, but unveils before your faithfulness and your humility.”

Genuine faithfulness and humility become emptiness. Not emptiness as vacuum or void. Not emptiness as worthlessness but that emptiness which establishes no obstacles to complete acceptance of what *may* be given — always a total surprise. Not emptiness as uncertainty but emptiness as *no* certainty, not even the certainty of uncertainty.

Carroll again: “We set out from God the benevolent (One) and go to God the dark nothing. (Contemplative prayer) gets below the easy dogmas and habits of familiarity we have with God and drags us to the edge of deepness we do not understand.”

Here is emptiness which cannot say what it would be like to be full, which no longer *tries* to say, but only waits and listens. Contemplative prayer is emptiness. Not a seeing but a being seen; being seen by God who comes not as something but as nothing — no thing. God is not an assurance, a concept, an experience to be gained. God is not a Being alongside other beings. God is that from which everything in heaven and on earth has its being. God is the fullness of all that is.

Contemplative prayer is being seen, no defenses, all of me — by the God who in God’s own time comes to our faithfulness, humility, emptiness. Not to fill us up but to open us up. Contemplation is the most radical, the most liberated way of life there is. Bit by bit, all the separations and alienations, all the defenses, all the overagainstnesses, all the objectifications of others from which spring the horrors of our times — fall away.



Bit by bit, God opens us up with all God's people to that love which is beyond knowledge but not beyond knowing. Love. Not control. Not tranquility. Those moments of the dance when you know our separation is illusion; our oneness is reality. Not filled up. Opened up. In fleeting moments, I know this identification, this unity, with all that is makes me richer, but I resist and guard against it. Contemplative prayer irresistibly brings clarity on how much I withhold myself, even though I know that is not living. "A contemplative vision will not permit us to hide from the blood of children who even now die for want of food we feed our dogs," Carroll stresses. "A contemplative way of living will not exempt us from the dangerous struggle to make America's best dreams of justice and equality come true. It will engage us beyond comfort."

Seen by the One whose gaze loves the whole Creation, I can no longer be silent when from my office window I see old people scavenging in garbage cans and castoff children selling their bodies to survive — a shame on our society and a judgment on our economic system. *I feel* the gnawing pain of gay men and lesbian women ever afraid of being "found out," fired, humiliated, thrown in jail, even beaten to death on the streets, simply because of who they love. I can no longer avoid confronting those pressing for more and more weapons in a spiraling buildup going beyond folly, beyond insanity. Contemplative prayer exposes this reliance on weapons for what it is: idolatry. Placing our trust in the Prince of death. But the Prince of Peace under whose gaze I sit calls me to risk, as He did, to expose this false god taking bread from the mouths of the hungry to stuff his own belly already swollen with bombs.

Contemplative prayer makes real and rich that oneness with all that is, the fullness of being, that openness, that intimacy of which we are all terrified and for which we all yearn. This does not come to the timid, the arrogant or the dilettante. It is a discipline to which we are *all* called, part of which must include regular blocks of time in meditation, bringing with us all those others, for contemplative solitude is never solitary.

"Real silence and serious prayer are tough." Learning to be present to God even in God's absence. Waiting. Listening. Being emptied until there are no obstacles to complete acceptance of what may be given. Beware of that emptiness. We never know what God may choose to give. Or when. Or how. Or through whom. Except that it will be that love deemed "a terrible beauty." We are all called to this discipline for liberation, moving beyond the warmth to the fire. Not tomorrow. Not when it is convenient. Not when we feel like it. Not when we have time enough. Not when the vibes are right. Not only when something comes, but especially when nothing comes. Now. Not for the adulation, but only for the dance. ■

'As is'

A damp wind whips wet leaves under my feet
as I make my way through the streets
of old Southeast Portland where derelict duplexes
abut historic homes, an occasional restored mansion,
and an ancient firehouse, still in use,
reminiscent of earlier, simpler times.

On this late October Saturday, with chores done
and the week's unmeaningful work behind me,
I indulge my favorite pastime —
the only one left which I can still afford —
a visit to Goodwill's "As Is" store.

Here, in huge bins, at 50¢ per pound,
are clothes of every size, variety and condition,
waiting to be carried home
for washing, mending and sometimes remodeling
followed by distribution to non-affluent friends
who can't quite make it up America's ladder
of economic opportunity.

Here is an old copy of the National Geographic
containing a description of the development
of our ever-expanding universe and all it contains
from a power-filled microscopic spec
smaller than an atom.

Here I'm greeted by a small Black boy,
perched atop a pile of garments, solemn-faced,
huge liquid eyes considering the scene,
here are so many friends, fellow beneficiaries
of six years of Reaganomics,
sorting through the piles
for a child's sweater, a blanket,
or a pair of jeans.

Here, for a little while, I can relax,
away from all the pressure and the power trips
of competitive daily life in a land
whose "safety net" has long since disintegrated;
here, there is no need for pretense,
dissimulation or manipulation —
I can be myself,
"As is."

MaryJane Brewster

MaryJane Brewster, poet, mother and grandmother, has just published a book of poetry, *Verses in the Wind*, (\$6, WIM Publications, Box 137, San Francisco, CA 94114). The book contains many poems which first appeared in THE WITNESS. Brewster is an active member and former shop steward of the Oregon Public Employees Union (SEIU, AFL-CIO) and an activist in the peace and human rights movements. The daughter of a union printer, she early developed an interest in books, writing, and the concerns of working people, and is a firm believer in the transforming power of love.

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

break his legs.

I believe that Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees are indeed fleeing tyranny, not trying to get here for economic reasons as members of the Reagan administration are claiming. If I am ever going to give anyone the benefit of the doubt, it is not going to be this administration, whose leaders I trust very little.

When I first heard of the sanctuary movement in the Southwest, I tried to interest members of the Northern New Jersey Conference, United Methodist Church to draw up a resolution of support. I didn't have much luck then. But this year, praise be to God, it passed with no opposition.

Robert Keosian
Hawthorne, N.J.

Reagan pretty on TV

Several issues of THE WITNESS were awaiting my attention after some time away, therefore comments on your Letters to the Editor section may be very late.

My own letter about Vickie Miller's April letter, suggesting that she would have made life miserable for Peter, James, Barnabas, Stephen and Philip, those do-gooders she would have labeled "commies," did not see print (and that's OK). But I want to give a bit of advice to the Rev. Charles Farrar, who narrowly averted "tar and feathers" (June letters). Just hang on for a few more scores of years. When he reaches my four score, he'll just face benign neglect — poor old kook, he wants the Reagan administration to act in more Christian ways toward the needy and away from nuclear war and subsidizing the rape and murder of

peasant women and children.

People will let him rave; some may commiserate a bit; all will quickly move to "business as usual." To hell with peace and balanced budgets, he's pretty on TV, isn't he?

Fred R. Methered
Honolulu, Hawaii

Letter from Helen

You may have seen Mary McGrory's column claiming that the only media who note Plowshares actions are "obscure religious journals." To paraphrase the old quote, I suppose in the world of upper-crust peacemaking, the newsworthy speak only to the important, and the important speak only to Donahue.

It occurred to me after my recent spate of interviews that the judge sentenced me to prison, not to the American press; also that there are 73 other "Plowshares," and martyrdom should be shared. I plan to retire quickly from the public eye, and with any luck, THE WITNESS, the *National Catholic Reporter*, *Sojourners* and I can go down in blessed obscurity together.

After I clean my room and do the laundry, I will spend the afternoon lying in the sun and the evening writing an article for *Sequoia*. (I'm sure you've never heard of them either.) Tomorrow, a phone call to my kids, who will tell me about feeding the ducks and riding Big Wheels around the block. Not a very exciting life for a public figure, but quite satisfying for a lowly human being.

Helen Woodson
Alderson Federal Prison
Alderson, W. Va.

Mag not conventional

I do not believe there is any place in your readership for a white male parent in a conventional family who attends church regularly and supports a pluralistic society. Therefore I shall seek effective methods of bringing about social change rather than the futile effort espoused by your magazine.

Bob Coghill
Nenana, Alaska

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A view from the underside:

Black township theology

by Buti Tlhagale

This essay deliberately deals with a black theology of self-defense or self-affirmation in order to distance ourselves consciously from the following two perspectives. The first is the perspective that describes the direct assault (offensive acts) on the state, state institutions, state servants and on the symbols of the capitalist order as “unrest” or violence without any qualification.

The second involves the traditional Christian perspective that speaks of non-violence at all costs while institutionalized violence is part of the South African way of life.

The current state of emergency in South Africa calls to mind the 1961 state of emergency which blacks referred to then as police dictatorship. Today’s treason trials recall the mass trials of the early ’60s that had been aimed at crushing popular movements of resistance to the tyranny of the state. The black people then resisted the badge of slavery, the passes and the pass laws, with every might. Passes were burnt. Boycotts and strikes were organized. These are comparable to the current school and consumer boycotts. The difference is that today the liberation struggle has become the focal point of young people as never before.

The killings that took place in 1960 and in 1976-77 were mainly the result of police intervention. But so too in 1984-85, when more than 500 people were killed. It is usually reported that these people died “during actions where security forces had to protect property and peaceful communities.” More than 230 black people were killed by other black people during the 1984-85 uprisings.

The intensity of anger and violence that has been seen since September 1984 to today is unparalleled in recent South African history. It all started with the refusal to pay house rentals in the Vaal Triangle and in other areas of the Orange Free State. Members of the community councils were seen as being responsible for the hardships of the urban blacks. They therefore became the targets of angry and frustrated people. These councils were seen as an imposition on the black people by government. It therefore came as no surprise when some of the council members were driven out of their homes

and removed mercilessly. But then such a harsh punishment was equally meted out to persons suspected of being informers. Both property and the business premises of people associated directly or indirectly with the local government have been destroyed. Police killings led to more police killings. And so in the East Rand, Transvaal, and in the Eastern Cape, political funerals led to other deaths. Black people turned out by the thousands in an expression of solidarity on these occasions; the anger of the people was palpable.

The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that a significant number of schools came to a standstill and the young people have been pushed irrevocably into the forefront of the political struggle.

During the turmoil of the 1960s African political leaders had little hope that non-violent pressures could bring about radical change in South Africa. The apartheid system has always been understood and felt as an inherently violent system. When the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress openly resorted to violence as a means of bringing about radical political change, a new chapter in black politics had begun.

What the white community perceives as “unrest,” as sheer displays of savagery when persons associated with the apartheid system are burned to death by the application of the “necklace” — the burning tire — the black community interprets differently. Indeed the death of persons is to be regretted. But what seems to be a senseless destruction of life and property, of schools and buses and delivery vehicles, is in fact seen by blacks, especially young people, as an aggressive statement of a radical protest, of self-affirmation, a calculated tactic to compel the government to reckon with the frustrated aspirations of the black people.

What is seen as violence by most whites is also experienced as violence by blacks. But then blacks attach a radically different significance to it. It is a protest beyond moral indignation, beyond words. It is a direct assault on the apartheid system.

When blacks destroy community facilities, most whites perceive it as short-sightedness, but blacks on the other hand have virtually no stake in the protection and maintenance of public property in the townships. For years blacks have been referred to as “temporary sojourners” in the urban areas. The

Buti Tlhagale is a parish priest at Our Lady of Mercy, Soweto, and co-editor of *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology from South Africa*.



The fact that the Gospel or the life-history of Christ makes no room for the use of violence to right the wrongs of society remains a massive scandal among the oppressed. And yet the story of Christ is a story of a series of subversions.

psychological impact of forced homelessness — of exile experience as it were — has now taken its toll. The reversal of this process as a result of the Wiehahn and Riekert reports and the subsequent labor legislation of 1979 have not yet had the desired effect. The inane declaration of a dual citizenship for the black people has had even less effect. The denial of the permanence of black people in the urban areas has resulted in the direct denial of the development and improvement of the physical environment of the townships.

The litany of denials: of home ownership, of industry, of business premises, of investment in cultural facilities, etc., coupled with the iniquitous influx control system and the extremely limited availability of housing in the urban areas, have all created a deep sense of non-belonging. Besides, blacks have also been denied the right of participating meaningfully in the planning and management of their own local affairs. The establishment of the community councils was a unilateral decision on the part of government. This explains why some councillors have been driven out of their homes, and their property petrol-bombed. Some councils have been dismantled. Community councils are seen as part and parcel of the apartheid system. The series of denials and government highhandedness have led to the reaping of the whirlwind.

The government insists through the media that the current “unrest” is caused either by the black political organizations, hence the treason trials in Pretoria and Pietermaritzburg, and/or by the “criminal elements” in the black community. The Congress of South African Students has been banned

presumably because it is thought to be responsible for the upheavals. In any situation of political upheaval excesses on the part of the oppressed are to be expected. But this should in no way be confused with the general upsurge of the people in their demand for total freedom.

To blame hooligans or the African National Congress for the so-called unrest is tantamount to burying one’s head in the sand and thereby refusing to acknowledge that the apartheid system is the source of the problems. Finally, short of taking up arms like the South African Defense Force or like black political organizations that have been forced into exile, the present generation — in the complex scenario of consumer boycotts, work stoppages, work stay-aways, school disruptions, protests, the destruction of selected targets, the merciless killings of collaborators, etc. — is irrevocably committed to bursting the chains of the apartheid system. The state, through its agencies, has been thrown headlong into the turmoil. And as the dialectical relationship between the enforcers of the unjust laws and those who resist intensifies, the situation ceases to be simply a situation of “unrest” but becomes a veritable violent struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed.

This struggle is characterized by a massive upsurge of the black people, especially young people. The so-called peaceful people in the community, even though they are not directly involved in the upheaval, undoubtedly share the sentiments of those who are in the forefront of the liberation struggle. So much for the word “unrest.” This then brings us to the second consideration; the traditional Christian perspective on violence.

The Christian discussion on violence tends to revolve around nuclear or bacteriological warfare. The violent struggle of the oppressed people against white domination and against the ruthlessness of capitalism has simply been dismissed as terrorism and therefore immoral. The ambivalence that emerges from the ethical analysis of the violent struggle of the people has simply been shrugged off in favor of the status quo.

The Christian tradition has tended to uphold non-violence as a universal principle while within the very same tradition some speak of non-violence as a strategy rather than a principle. As a strategy it is therefore seen as a Christian attitude that refuses to retaliate: “You have heard it was said: ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’. But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you” (Mt 5:38).

The ideal of peace at all costs has permeated Christian thinking even though in certain Christian traditions exceptions are made. In expressing the peace-at-all-costs doctrine, Martin Luther King, Jr., has this to say about non-violence: “Finally it reaches the opponent and so stirs his

conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality.”

The South African black experience denies the above. For almost a century now the inherently violent apartheid system has simply entrenched itself with all the viciousness imaginable. There are no signs of reconciliation on the horizon.

There is of course another tradition. It was articulated by John Paul II in his 1982 Day of Peace Message: “Christians have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor.”

The majority of the black people see the white Nationalist Party as having no moral legitimacy to leadership and to government. It has not been elected by the black people but simply imposed itself on the people and denied them basic human rights.

The Christian tradition recognizes the legitimacy of the use of violence to defend the rights of a given state. But then from a township perspective the South African state is essentially a repressive state. The different branches of the state apparatus are seen as executing and maintaining the repression. The army is frequently remembered for its occupation of a foreign territory, Namibia, and for its incursions into Angola. It is equally remembered for its pre-emptive strikes in Lesotho, Mozambique and Botswana — leaving in its wake destroyed human life and property. In the townships where it is currently deployed under the state of emergency, it is said to have succeeded not only in destroying life but also in alienating the black community.

The political police are credited with harassment and even torture. Detainees have died in prisons. Explanations of the causes of death are taken by the township people with a grain of salt. The courts mete out punishment to those who flout the apartheid laws such as the pass laws. The different administrative departments enforce removals of black people. Finally blacks are excluded from the electoral system. They are precluded from any access to political power and from meaningful participation in the economic system of the country.

In the eyes of the black people, therefore, the state has no legitimacy. Co-optation through the establishment of the homelands has still not lent any meaningful legitimacy to the state. Can a state without any power-base in or even sympathy from the majority of the people have a moral right to rule over the majority or even have a moral right to use violence in order to preserve an intrinsically violent political system?

When blacks resort to violent means of redressing the wrongs of the apartheid system, it is perceived by blacks not only as a right to resist “in the name of an elementary requirement of justice” but also as a duty to resist the crushing repression of the racist regime. . .



Black or White?

The nagging question that needs to be answered is whether a violent struggle by black South Africans can ever be justifiable or indeed whether the violent repression by the apartheid regime is justifiable. Cast in the mold of the classical tradition of the just violent struggle, the township perspective yields the following argument.

The semblance of order and peaceful co-existence has been shattered by the spiral of a violent struggle that has engulfed the black townships. The demand of the black people, especially the youth, is, firstly, the abolition of the present political order and the establishment of a non-racial, democratic political system on the basis of one man, one vote. Secondly, the present exploitative capitalist system ought to give way to a more equitable socialist system that will develop an economic program with the view to making amends in those areas where the apartheid economic system has simply played havoc and left in its wake human misery.

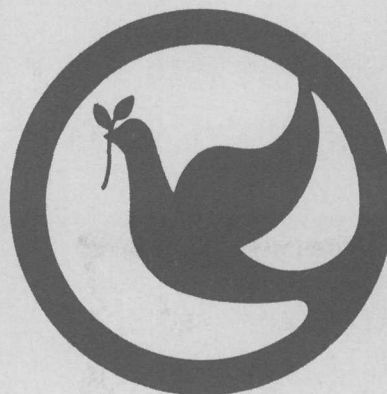
There is no solution in sight to the present political conflict as the government clings to its racist policies of denying blacks a meaningful citizenship, of upholding the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act, of refusing the release of political prisoners, etc. Instead the government has responded to the black violent struggle with the might of the army and the security forces. . .

Whilst the logic of the ethic of force when viewed from a township perspective does seem to support at a rational level the justifiability of a violent struggle as a last resort, the gospel imperatives on the other hand seem to challenge the adequacy of the moral principles of a just violent struggle.

The criticisms levelled against biblical literalism in scriptural interpretation and against the selective use of biblical texts out of context (proof-texting) notwithstanding, a host of scriptural hard-sayings continue to plague the minds of the oppressed Christians.

● “If you love those who love you, what reward have you?” (*Mt. 5:46*).

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● "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But now I tell you: Do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you" (*Mt. 5:38*).

● "Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors" (*Mt. 5:44*).

● "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (*Mt. 5:9*).

These citations and so too the entire thrust of the Sermon on the Mount not only do not make sense in the face of the continuing repression and the barbarous behaviour of the servants of the state, but they also tend to cultivate fatalistic attitudes among the oppressed who look forward to the "fullness of time" that hardly appears on the horizon. The fact of the matter is that for more than two centuries large sections of the white Christian community have continued to treat blacks as "kaffirs" and as servants and not as friends so that the example set by the Master that all persons are equal remains an empty expression (*Jn. 15:15*). Christians have been commanded to "love one another just as I love you" (*Jn. 15:12*). In a South Africa where the Group Areas Act, the Separate Amenities Act, the Population Registration Act, etc., and concepts of "own affairs" and ethnic identity reign supreme, trust, mutuality and friendship remain foreign and indeed inimical to the official policy of the repressive state.

The black experience therefore appears throughout the last centuries as an experience of the wilderness. Thus South Africa under white domination continues to be a "Meribah," as it were, a Massah where the black people are exposed to an unending test by fire for no apparent reason while the racists and capitalists thrive and continue to deal treacherously.

So shattering is the experience of oppression, deprivation and humiliation that the experience of godlessness amongst sections of the black population is here to stay. And so too are the growing convictions of atheism and communism that feed on the devastating scourge of apartheid Christianity. . .

Such a desperate situation, far from crushing the burning desire to be free, has unleashed new energies especially amongst the young black people who have sprung forward to resist injustice. The anger of the weak has confounded the mighty (*1 Cor. 1:27*). Hundreds of young people have experienced detention without trial. Since the state of emergency, thousands of people have been detained.

Some of the young people have laid down their lives for the sake of justice — inexorably pursuing the model of Christ who died at the hands of his persecutors. This supreme sacrifice is in line with the noble tradition of those who have been in prison for more than two decades or those forced into exile for demanding simple justice.

The desire for freedom has been rekindled, hence the relentless effort to subvert the inherently violent socio-political

order. The fact that the Gospel or the life-history of Christ makes no room for the use of violence to right the wrongs of society remains a massive *scandal* among the oppressed. And yet the story of Christ is a story of a series of subversions. He was continually in conflict with the socio-religious and political order of his day.

He touched lepers (the unclean), healed on a Sabbath, cancelled debts, sat at table with debtors. The Gospels are full of instances of radical departure from tradition:

"You have heard that it was said . . ." (*Mt. 5:38*).

or "Have you never read . . ." (*Mk. 2:23*).

or "But it is not so among you . . ." (*Mk. 10:43*).

or "Who are my mother and my brothers?" (*Mk. 3:33*).

Belo in his *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* describes this subversion as the "tearing of the old symbolic order, the bursting of the old order."

The rekindled desire to be free and the intensive assault on the apartheid institutions are not incompatible with the tradition of subversion modelled on the person of Christ. In fact Christian discipleship demands the subversion of the oppressive socio-political order in order to establish justice and consequently peace.

Unless genuine radical socio-political change is experienced by township and village people, violence is bound to break out intermittently. The meaningful participation in the political process is imperative. Participation must be seen to be real and not a token involvement. But so too the participation in the economy of the country. The apartheid market system favors the retention of privileges of power, wealth and income in the white community. The dispossessed must be seen to have access to the economic resources of the land. If these changes take place, only then can South Africa begin to talk about "the things that make for peace." Change in the political arena must be accompanied by change in the economic system. If violence is to be avoided and peace to be established then apartheid must be uprooted completely. Nothing less than this will do. ■

(The above essay is excerpted with permission from a longer chapter in The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology from South Africa, edited by Itumeleng J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagale, to be published in January by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545, at \$11.95.

Topics include black theology's task in relation to the double bondage of racial oppression and economic exploitation; the interplay between U.S. black theology and black theology in South Africa; the relevance of African traditional religions for the liberation struggle; the impact of the black consciousness movement, and black feminist responses to black theology.)